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AN ORATION

Delivered MAY viii, MDCCLXXIX,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Hon. JOHN WINTHROP, Esq; LL.D. F.R.S.

Hollisian Professor

Of MATHEMATICS and NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

AT

CAMBRIDGE,

IN THE

State of Massachusetts-Bay.

By STEPHEN SEWALL, A. M.

Hancock Professor of the Hebrew and other Oriental Languages.

The Lips of the wise disperse knowledge.
A man shall be commended according to his wisdom.

SOLOMON.

BOSTON:
Printed by THOMAS and JOHN FLEET, 1779.

A Funeral ORATION.

THE ſolemnity of this afternoon, my reſpectable hearers, is truly mournful. It is no leſs than to pay the laſt—laſt reſpects, due to that great and good man, DOCTOR WINTHROP. A character ſo eminent and diſtinguiſhed far ſurpaſſes my utmoſt abilities to do him honor; though none can be exerted more readily in the attempt.

If birth could give reputation, none had a higher claim to it than our deceaſed friend; deſcended, through a race of reſpectable anceſtors, from the illuſtrious Father of that company of Chriſtian heroes, who laid the foundation ſtone of this, now, great and reſpectable ſtate. Under a venerable oak, late ſtanding on our plain, Governor WINTHROP was wont to hold his little ſenate. From ſuch beginnings roſe this mighty empire.

But,

But, not reſting in derived honors, Doct. WINTHROP, by his own merit, added luſtre to his anceſtors. The God of the ſpirits of all fleſh furniſhed him richly with ſuperior endowments to ſerve mankind in a variety of important ſtations. Aſſiduous cultivation improved the gifts of nature. When a youth, he early diſcovered a peculiar genius for mathematical and philoſophical ſtudies, which he purſued with intenſe application and unremitted ardor. His improvements were proportionate to ſuch exertions of ſuch a genius. This marked him out to the Corporation of Harvard College, as the moſt proper perſon to be ſeated in the Profeſſor's chair of thoſe branches of ſcience, when it became vacant. This chair he hath, for more than forty years, filled with great honor to himſelf, and to the higheſt ſatisfaction of thoſe who were under his inſtructions. His diction was refinedly pure, and exquiſitely elegant; his method perfectly eaſy, and in the higheſt degree perſpicuous. So compleat a maſter was he of every ſubject he handled, that each new lecture ſeemed a new revelation. The dignity and mildneſs of his aſpect, at once commanded both reſpect and love. For the truth of theſe things, I need only appeal to thoſe who have enjoyed the privilege of being under his tuition.

In

In the government and concerns of the College, the judiciouſneſs of his counſels gave peculiar weight to every word that dropped from his lips.

The ingenious publications and extenſive correſpondence of our eminently learned Profeſſor made him known and reſpected through the whole literary world.* And ſeveral learned Societies, both in this and foreign countries, conferred on him their higheſt honours. To his ſo extenſive reputation the College was greatly indebted for the ſpeedy and ample repair of the public Library and philoſophical Aparatus, after they had, ſome years ago, been deſolated by fire.

But his uncommon abilities were not confined to literary purſuits. His knowledge was univerſal. He was well verſed in politics, and perfectly acquainted with

* In the year 1740, happened a tranſit of the Planet Mercury over the Sun's diſc, viſible in the American hemiſphere. Dr. WINTHROP, then in the ſecond year of his Profeſſorſhip, obſerved it with an accuracy, for which he was diſtinguiſhed. The obſervations were tranſmitted to the Royal Society of London, by whom very honorable notice was taken of them and their author. They are recorded in the XLII Vol. of the Tranſactions of that Society. Reſpectful mention is alſo made of them in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, for the year 1756, as appears from the following extract.

" Le 2 Mai 1740, à Cambridge dans la nouvelle Angleterre, M. Winthrop obſerva Mercure ſur le Soleil; ſuppoſant la différence des Méridiens 4^h 53', comme M. de l'Iſle me l'a communiquée, le temps moyen de la conjonction vraie à Paris fut la 2 Mai à 10^h 36' 37'' du ſoir, la latitude géocentrique 14' 59''; ainſi le lieu du Soleil etant 1^s 12^d 43' 19'', le lieu du nœud eſt 1^s 15^d 15' 0'', moins avancé de 5' 56'' que dans les Tables de M. Halley."

with the conſtitution of his own Country. Of her invaded rights he was a uniform, wiſe and warm aſſertor. For this, while honoured with a ſeat in her higheſt Council, he received the marks of the invader's diſpleaſure; and proportionable teſtimonies of his Country's approbation.

In private life, the accompliſhed Gentleman, the finiſhed Scholar and the devout Chriſtian appeared to great advantage. His converſation was always agreeably entertaining and, at the ſame time, uſefully inſtructive. So accurate was his knowledge of the holy Scriptures, that one would have thought Divinity had been his principal ſtudy. He contented not himſelf with tranſlations. He examined them in their originals, in which he was a complete critic. In theſe ſacred books his belief was firm and unſhaken. From them he derived his conſolations under the frequent diſtreſſing maladies he was called to encounter. Life and immortality, in them held out to view, had long reconciled him to the proſpect of quitting his tenement of clay. And when the ſummons actually came, he did not recoil; but with the firmneſs of a chriſtian philoſopher, calmly reſigned up his ſpirit into the hands of a faithful Creator.

The tender connections it gives me pain to mention —It cauſes tears—On ſuch an occaſion Jeſus wept——

A moſt affectionate husband; a wiſe and tender parent; a pleaſant brother, and kind to all. My reſpected friend, who waſt the partner of his joys and ſorrows, may that BEING who hath ſtiled himſelf the Widow's God, be thy ſupport and conſolation in this day of deep diſtreſs! May the Father of the fatherleſs cauſe a double portion of that good ſpirit, that was in the parent, to deſcend and reſt on the children, who now ariſe up and call him bleſſed! And may the care of a kind Providence be continued to her who is now a ſecond time become an orphan! With the ſurviving brother and ſiſter, and other near relatives, I heartily ſympathize. The mutual affection and entire harmony, which ſubſiſted through life, muſt render the ſeparation painful in death; but, happily, it will not be eternal. The followers of thoſe who, through faith and patience, inherit the promiſes, will with them e'er long have a joyful meeting, and union everlaſting.

My fathers and brethren, in the government and inſtruction of the College, I ſincerely condole with you in the repeated breaches made upon us. Scarce had we put off the cyprus for an ELIOT, before we are called to put it on for a WINTHROP, both burning and ſhining lights in our Univerſity. May He, with whom is the reſidue of the ſpirit, pour it out on ſurvivors; that this

Seminary

Seminary of learning, the earlieſt care of our pious anceſtors, may never want thoſe who may take herby the hand, and lead her on in the paths of ſcience virtue and religion !

Ah ! my young friends, who are now in the purſuit of ſcience, no more will the GREAT DOCTOR WINTHROP open, to your wondering view, worlds beyond worlds in the immenſity of ſpace ; diſcloſe the ſecret ſprings of nature's operation ; ſhew the nice adjuſtment of her laws ; and thence lead you up to nature's God.

Alas ! the learned Profeſſor, the wiſe Counſellor, the upright Judge, the agreeable Friend, the affectionate Husband, the tender Parent, is no more !

It remains, my reſpectable hearers, that we commit the body of our much eſteemed friend to the ſilent tomb ; but not as thoſe who have no hope. We do it in a firm belief of a glorious reſurrection to eternal life ; to which may we all arrive, through Jeſus Chriſt, who is the reſurrection and the life ; to him be glory and dominion forever !

A M E N.